



# Los Angeles County Commission on Local Governmental Services

383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration  
500 West Temple Street  
Los Angeles, California 90012  
(213) 974-1431 Fax (213) 633-5102

**Chairperson**  
Richard J. Rosenthal, CRE

**Vice-Chairperson**  
Patricia G. Gray

Jeanne Breunig  
Shana E. Epstein  
Gordon Gray  
Rodrigo A. Guerra, Jr.  
Tyler Kelley  
Algird Leiga  
Sharon Martinez  
Matthew J. Parlow  
Angela J. Reddock  
Kenneth D. Rozell  
David Spence  
Joyce Streator

## **MINUTES**

October 3, 2006 Meeting  
500 West Temple Street  
Sybil Brand Conference Room 372  
Los Angeles, California 90012

Chairperson Rosenthal called the meeting to order at 9:24 a.m.

### **APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 5, 2006 MINUTES**

**On motion of Commissioner Rozell, seconded by Commissioner Leiga, the Commission unanimously approved the September 5, 2006 Minutes.**

### **CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

- Commissioner Erin Pak has officially resigned from the Commission.
- Introduced Ms. Jennifer Cohen as a liaison to the taxicab study.
- Commissioner Dave Spence is in the process of finding an appointee to represent the Commission as a member of the Independent Cities Association.

### **STUDY COMMITTEE AND TASK FORCE STATUS REPORT**

Commissioner Parlow provided a brief overview of the Los Angeles taxicab service study as published by Gary Blasi, Professor, UCLA School of Law. Commissioner Parlow and Commissioner Kelley met with Mr. Blasi to discuss his findings and how it may be of assistance to the Commission's Proposed Taxicab Study. Commissioner Parlow introduced Mr. Blasi to the Commission and a self introduction followed.

Mr. Blasi reported major failures were found in the City of Los Angeles' system of oversight and regulation of the taxi industry, with significant consequences for taxi drivers, their families, companies and the general public. Mr. Blasi's findings were based on a sample survey of 302 Los Angeles taxi drivers at LAX along with dozens of in-depth interviews with taxi drivers, taxi company managers, and City officials.

The City of Los Angeles has complete authority to regulate the taxi industry as a "public utility" (2303 taxicabs) and can impose any reasonable condition on the issuance of franchises, which are adopted by ordinance.

For instance, each taxi driver must purchase their own vehicle (\$40,000) and also pay mandatory monthly dues. The median age of a taxi cab driver is 47 years old earning a wage of \$8.39 per hour. About half of the taxi drivers suffer from back and leg problems attributed to their long working hours (up to 72 hours per week). Specifically, most drivers suffer from what is known as a "taxi limp" caused by long hours of driving. Taxi companies do not provide health insurance for its drivers or their families. Since most taxi drivers are unable to afford health insurance, they rely on Medi-Cal or other similar government assistance programs.

According to the survey, half of the taxis in the City of Los Angeles are illegal or "bandit" cabs. While the population density in South Los Angeles steadily increases, taxi service in this area is in decline. Consequently, for people with disabilities, senior citizens, and low income populace in this area, taxi's are the only means of transportation. Los Angeles taxi drivers spend 60% of their time driving without passengers and pay roughly \$1,200 a year in licensing fees. Mr. Blasi also advised numerous restrictions on taxi drivers in Downtown Los Angeles and their inability to effectively pick up prospective customers is also an issue of concern affecting the welfare of taxi drivers.

In response to Chairperson Rosenthal, Mr. Blasi commented he is interested in continuing to monitor the Los Angeles taxicab industry, but noted funding is limited. Chairperson Rosenthal thanked Mr. Blasi for his informative presentation.

Jennifer Cohen reported two issues of interest to the City of Los Angeles; 1) Oversight of fee collection for franchising and licensing of taxi industry by the Department of Transportation (DOT) and 2) Bandit cabs. Ms. Cohen advised Councilmember Wendy Gruel, City of Los Angeles, is interested in reviewing the Commission's scoping document when available. In response to Chairperson Rosenthal, Professor Blasi reported limousine service is regulated by the State of California's Public Utilities Commission.

Commissioner Leiga advised the 88 cities in Los Angeles County are diverse and require different needs. Although taxi services in some cities generate revenue, regulating the entire taxi service industry may be cumbersome.

**MATTERS NOT ON THE POSTED AGENDA (TO BE PRESENTED AND PLACED ON THE AGENDA FOR A FUTURE MEETING)**

There were none.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Betty Hung, Attorney, Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles, helped in forming the Taxicab Alliance and offered her assistance to the Commission as needed. Ms. Hung reported improving taxi driver's working conditions will also improve the safety for passengers.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:55 a.m.

**ATTENDANCE**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Jeanne Breunig  
Patricia Gray  
Rod Guerra, Jr  
Tyler Kelley  
Algird Leiga  
Matthew Parlow  
Angela Reddock  
Richard Rosenthal  
Kenneth Rozell

**MEMBERS NOT PRESENT**

Shana Epstein  
Gordon Gray  
Sharon Martinez  
David Spence  
Joyce Streator

**STAFF**

Peter Papadakis

Garen Khachian

**GUESTS**

Ron Morales, Los Angeles County Chief Administrative Office

Gary Blasi, Professor, UCLA School of Law

Betty Hung, Directing Attorney, Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles